

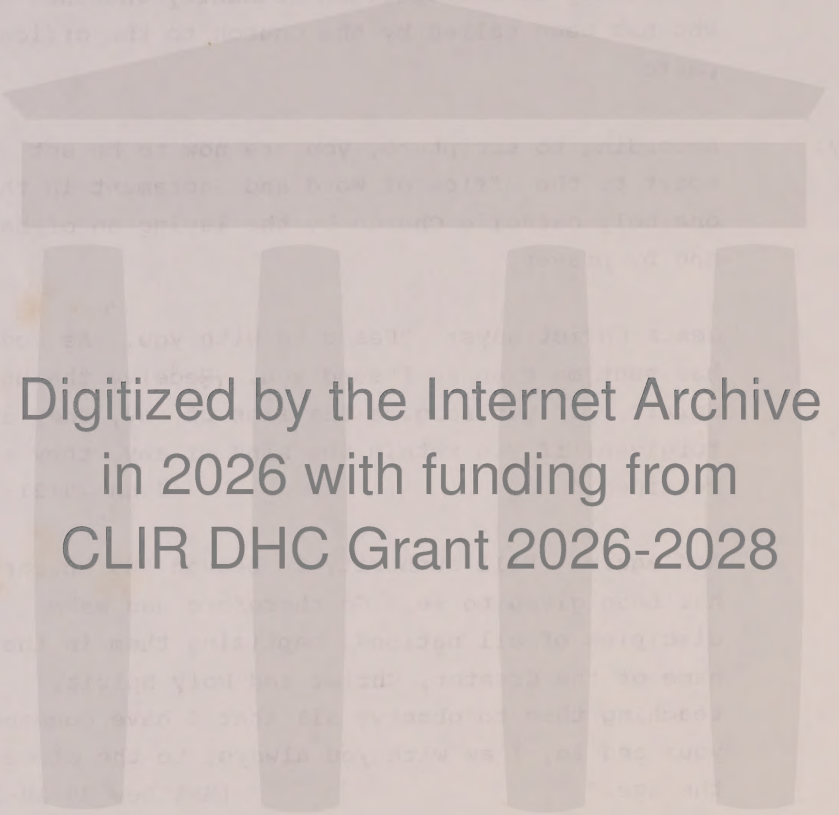
Janet: I present for licensing to the holy ministry of Word and Sacrament Clifford Morrison, who has been prepared, examined and certified for this ministry withing the Church of Christ through the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches and who has been called by the Church to the office of pastor.

Jay: According to scripture, you are now to be set apart to the office of Word and Sacrament in the one holy catholic Church by the laying on of hands and by prayer.

Jesus Christ says: "Peace be with you. As God has sent me even so I send you. Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven: if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." (John 20:21-23)

And again: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore nad make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

St Paul writes: I received from God what I also delivered to you that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "this is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and



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drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until
Christ comes. (1 Cor 11:23-26)

Jay: Before almighty God, to whom you must give
account, and in the presence of this congregation,
I ask: Will you accept this role, believing that
the Church's call is God's call to the ministry of
Word and Sacrament?

Cliff: I will with God's help.

Jay: The church in which you are to be licensed
confesses that the Holy Scriptures are the
inspired word of God and finds its beliefs
reflected in the historic creeds, Apostles and
Nicene. Will you therefore preach and teach in
accordance with the Holy Scriptures and these
creeds?

Cliff: I will with God's help.

Jay: Will you be diligent in your study of the Holy
Scriptures and in your use of the means of grace?
Will you pray for God's people, nourish them with
the Word and Holy Sacraments, and lead them by
your own example in faithful service and holy
living?

Cliff: I will with God's help.

Jay: Will you give faithful witness in the world, that
God's love may be known in all that you do?

Cliff: I will with God's help.

Jay: ~~Do not~~ you promise to submit yourself, in Christ, to the
Government of this Fellowship and to any District or church
to which you may be called.

Cliff: I do

Jay: May almighty God, who has given you the will to do these things, graciously give you the strength and compassion to perform them.

RITE OF BLESSING

Jay: Holy God, we praise you that Christ has poured our gifts abundantly on the Church, making some apostles, some prophets, some pastors and teachers, to equip your people for their work of ministry for building up the body of Christ.

(At this time the District Coordinator lays both hands on Cliff's head. Other clergy are also invited to lay on hands.)

Jay: Eternal God, through your Son, Jesus Christ, pour out your Holy Spirit upon Cliff and fill him with the gifts of grace for the ministry of Word and Sacrament.

Bless his proclamation of your Word and administration of your Rites and Sacraments, O God, so that your Church may be gathered for praise and strengthened for service. Make him a faithful pastor, patient teacher, wise counselor. Grant that in all things he may serve without reproach, that your people may be renewed and by your neame be glorified in the Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever. AMEN.

PRESENTATION OF THE BIBLE

Marge: Take this Bible, for which you are appointed an interpreter; and be diligent to study the things that are written there. That you may faithfully and truly teach the Gospel of the grace of god.

PRESENTATION OF THE STOLE

Felicia: Receive this stole as a sign of your work, walk in obedience to Christ, serving God's people and remembering the promise: "Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your soul. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

SCRIPTURAL ADDRESS

John Hankins "Strive for righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith." (1 Tim 6:11-13)

Janet Sues-Pierce "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians, to feed the Church of Christ which was obtained with his own blood." (Acts 20:28)

Steve Parker "Tend the flock of God that is your charge, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock, and when the chief shepherd is manifested you will obtain the unfading crown of glory." (1 Peter 5:24)

Jay: Care for God's people, bear their burdens and do not betray their confidence. So discipline yourself in life and teaching that you preserve the truth, giving no occasion for false security or illusory hope. Witness faithfully in word and deed to all people. Give and receive comfort as you serve within the Church. And be of good courage, for God has called you, and your labor in Christ is not in vain.

AFFIRMATION OF THE CONGREGATION

Marge: Do you, assembled as the people of God and speaking for the whole Church, receive Cliff as a messenger of Jesus Christ sent to serve God's people with the Gospel of hope and salvation? Do you regard him as a servant of Christ?

People: We do.

Felicia: Will you pray for him, help and honor him for his work's sake and in all things strive to live together in the peace and unity of Christ?

People: We do.

Jay: Let it be acclaimed that Cliff Morrison is licensed as a minister in the Church of Christ. He has Christ's authority to preach the Word and administer the Rites and Sacraments, serving God's people.

Steve: Friends will you now greet the Reverend Clifford Morrison

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Jay: Let it be acclaimed that Cliff Morrison is licensed as a minister in the Church of Christ. He has Christ's authority to preach the Word and administer the Rites and Sacraments, serving God's people.

Steve: Friends will you now greet the Reverend ~~Steve~~
Clifford Morrison

we

SHEPHERD'S CROOK (Lloyd Lewis, a clergy representative of Nashville and staff of Vanderbilt Divinity School):

Rodney, take this shepherd's crook and be among the clergy of this community proclaiming the good new of God's love to all people and crying out against the injustices which we see around us. Shepherd your flock as Christ, the Great Shepherd, taught us. Gather them as a mother hen gathers her young around her.

R: AMEN.

CHASUBLE (Larry Nunnally, Jim Aldredge, and Ricky Ledbetter, members of the congregation):

Rodney, accept this chasuble and be among us to celebrate communion at the altar in the breaking of bread and the blessing of the cup. Let the invitation to feast at the Lord's table be open to all people.

R: AMEN.

THE NEW PASTOR KNEELS IN THE MIDST OF THE PEOPLE AND PRAYS:

O Lord my God, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; yet You have called Your servant to stand in Your house, and to serve at Your altar. To You and to Your service I devote myself--body, soul, and spirit. Fill my memory with the record of Your mighty works; enlighten my understanding with the light of Your Holy Spirit; and may all the desires of my heart and will center in what You would have me do. Make me an instrument of Your salvation for the people entrusted to my care, and grant that I may faithfully administer Your Holy Sacraments, and by my life and teachings set forth Your true and living Word. Be always with me in carrying out the duties of my ministry. In prayer, quicken my devotion; in praises, heighten my love and gratitude; in preaching, give me readiness of thought and expression; and grant that, by the clearness and brightness of Your Holy Word, all the world may be drawn into Your blessed dominion. All this I ask for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Co-celebrants present the new minister to the congregation, saying:

GREET YOUR NEW PASTOR.

(The congregation expresses its approval.)

(MCC Pittsburgh Vice-Moderator turns to Rodney, saying):

May the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you, may the Holy Spirit surround you and comfort you, may you continue in the ministry to which you have been called. Go in peace with our love and prayers.

DISTRICT COORDINATOR (addresses Rodney):

Rodney, do you in the presence of this congregation commit yourself to this new trust and responsibility?

RODNEY: I do.

DISTRICT COORDINATOR (addresses congregation):

Will you who witness this new beginning, support and uphold Rodney in this new ministry?

PEOPLE: WE WILL.

THE LITANY

DISTRICT COORDINATOR, JAY NEELY: Let us then offer our prayers to God for all the people of this congregation, and for Rodney, their pastor.

L: God the Creator,
R: HAVE MERCY ON US.

L: God the Christ,
R: HAVE MERCY ON US.

L: Holy Trinity, one God,
R: HAVE MERCY ON US.

L: We pray to you, Jesus Christ, for the Holy Church of God, that it may be filled with truth and love, and be found without fault at the Day of Your Coming, we pray to You, O Lord:
R: LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

L: For all members of Your Church in their vocation and ministry, that they may serve You in a true and Godly life, we pray to You, O Lord:
R: LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

L: For Rodney, chosen minister in Your Church, we pray to You, O Lord:
R: LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

L: That he may faithfully fulfill the duties of this ministry, build up Your Church, and glorify Your name, we pray to You, O Lord:
R: LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

L: For John, his spouse, that he may be adorned with all Christian virtues, we pray to You, O Lord:
R: LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

L: For the founders of this Church, and the founders of this Fellowship, that we may continue in their steadfast hope that all may worship God freely, we pray to You, O Lord:
R: LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER.

L: Rejoicing in the fellowship of the saints, let us commend ourselves, and one another, and all our life to Christ our God:
R: TO YOU, O LORD OUR GOD.

L: Lord, have mercy.
R: CHRIST, HAVE MERCY.
L: Lord, have mercy.

THE PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS
(representatives of the congregation, the clergy, and the community stand before the congregation with the new minister, saying):

VICE-MODERATOR (turning to the congregation):

We come now to present Rodney, our new pastor, with some symbolic gifts of his life and work among us.

THE KEYS TO THE CHURCH (Mark Brown, Vice-Moderator):
Rodney, receive these keys and let the doors of the church be open to all people.
R: AMEN.

A CROSS (Steve Jenks, a Deacon):
Rodney, take this cross to wear as an outward sign of the Christ within you--once a symbol of shame, now a symbol of the loving grace of Jesus who died for all of us.
R: AMEN.

A PINK TRIANGLE (Penny Campbell, a Board member of T-GALA):
Rodney, take this pink triangle which was once used to mark homosexuals for persecution and death. While today, persecution and murdering of gay men and lesbians still exist, we no longer wear this as a symbol of shame, but as a symbol of our struggle for freedom to love whom we choose.
R: AMEN.

A BIBLE (Reg Laswell, a Deacon):
Rodney, accept this Bible, and be among us as one who proclaims Your Word.
R: AMEN.

A STOLE (a member of the LayDES Auxillary):
Rodney, receive this stole and be among us as a pastor and a minister.
R: AMEN.

A BOOK OF PRAYERS (Pat Floyd, a founding member):
Rodney, receive this book of prayers and be among us as a person of prayer.
R: AMEN.

OIL OF HEALING (Charles Jones, a vessel of healing):
Rodney, use this oil and be among us as a healer and a reconciler.
R: AMEN.

~~Rev. Oscar:~~ *Audy Mullins*

Will you be diligent in the reading and study of the Holy Scriptures, and in seeking the knowledge of such things as may make you a stronger and more able minister of Christ?

Pastor Moore: I will.

~~Rev. Oscar:~~ *Audy Mullins*

Will you endeavor so to minister the Word of God and the sacraments of the New Covenant, that the reconciling love of Christ may be known and received?

Pastor Moore: I will.

~~Rev. Oscar:~~ *Greg Bullard*

Will you undertake to be a faithful pastor to all whom you are called to serve, laboring together with them and with your fellow ministers to build up the family of God?

Pastor Moore: I will.

~~Rev. Oscar:~~ *Greg Bullard*

Will you do your best to pattern your life in accordance with the teachings of Christ, so that you may be a wholesome example to your people?

Pastor Moore: I will.

~~Rev. Oscar:~~ *Kay Hendrix*

Will you persevere in prayer, both in public and in private asking God's grace, both for yourself and for others, offering all your labors to God, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, and in the sanctification of the Holy Spirit?

Pastor Moore: I will.

~~Rev. Oscar:~~ *Kay Hendrix*

May the Lord who has given you the will to do these things give you grace and power to perform them.

Pastor Moore: Amen

THE INSTITUTION....District Coordinator Jay Neely

Jay Neely:

We have come together tonight to welcome Pastor Mary Moore, who has been chosen to serve as Pastor of MCC Charleston. We believe that she is well qualified, and that she has been prayerfully and lawfully selected.

Pastor Moore, do you, in the presence of this congregation, commit yourself to this new trust and responsibility?

Pastor Moore: I do.

Jay Neely:

Will you, the congregation of MCC Charleston, who witness this new beginning, support and uphold Pastor Moore in this ministry?

Congregation: We will.

Jay Neely:

Everliving God, strengthen and sustain Pastor Moore, that with patience and understanding she may love and care for your people, and grant that together they may follow Jesus Christ, offering to you their gifts and talents; through Christ, who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Congregation: Amen.

THE INDUCTION.....The Ministers of MCC Charleston

The Ministers of GLAD

The Ministers of UFMCC

After each presentation, Pastor Moore responds with, "I will." The congregation then responds, "Amen."

Emmett

Linda H. Pastor Moore, accept this Bible, and be among us as one who proclaims the Word.

Dennis Luft: Pastor Moore, take this water and baptize in obedience to our Lord.

Sally (or Shirley C.)

~~Gerry~~ Pastor Moore, receive this book of prayer, and be among us as a person of prayer.

GREG

~~Paul~~: Pastor Moore, use this oil, and be among us as a healer and reconciler.

Alban

~~Van~~: Pastor Moore, receive these keys, and let the doors of our church be open to all people.

~~Lynn~~, with Local Church Bylaws

~~Jay Neely~~, with GLAD District Bylaws

~~Rev. Bob Galloway~~, with Fellowship Bylaws

Pastor Moore, obey these Bylaws and be among us to share in the councils of this district and Fellowship.

Cal & Cliff To

~~Pat, Keith, Milton, & Dana~~: Pastor Moore, take this bread and wine, and be among us to break the Bread and bless the Cup.

Shirley & Ray John H.

~~Barbara, Debbie & June~~: Pastor Moore, receive this stole, and be among us as pastor and priest.

PRAYER OF ACCEPTANCE.....Pastor Mary Moore

O Lord, my God, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; yet you have called your servant to stand in your house, and to serve at your altar. To you and to your service, I devote myself, my body, soul and spirit. Fill my memory with your mighty works; enlighten my understanding with the light of your Holy Spirit; and may all the desires of my heart and will center in what you would have me do. Make me an instrument of your salvation for the people entrusted to my care, and grant that I may faithfully administer your Holy Sacraments, and by my life and teaching set forth your true living Word. Be always with me in carrying out the duties of my ministry. In prayer, quicken my devotion; in praises, heighten my love and gratitude; in preaching, give me readiness of thought and expression; and grant that, by the clearness and brightness of your Holy Word, all the world may be drawn into your blessed realm. All this I ask for the sake of your Child, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

LAYING ON OF HANDS.....All Witnesses

COVENANTING CEREMONY FOR PASTOR MARY M. MOORE AND MCC CHARLESTON

September 15, 1990

SONG: "Side by Side".....Dennis Luft

THE EXAMINATION.....Rev. Bob Galloway
Rev. Christine Oscar

Dennis Luft
~~Rev. Galloway~~:

My Sister, the Church is the family of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Holy Spirit. All baptized people are called to make Christ known as Savior and Lord, and to share in the renewing of God's world. Now you are called to work as a pastor, priest, and teacher together with your congregation and to take your share in the councils of the Church.

As a pastor, it will be your task to proclaim by word and deed the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to fashion your life in accordance with its precepts. You are to love and serve the people among whom you work, caring alike for young and old, strong and weak, rich and poor. You are to preach, to declare God's forgiveness to penitent sinners, to pronounce God's blessing, to share in the administration of Holy Baptism and in the celebration of the mysteries of Christ's Body and Blood, and to perform the other ministrations entrusted to you.

In all that you do, you are to nourish Christ's people from the riches of God's grace, and strengthen them to glorify God in this life and in the life to come.

~~Rev. Oscar~~: *John Haukeis*

My sister, Do you believe that you are truly called by God and God's Holy Church to this priesthood?

Pastor Moore: I believe I am so called.

~~Rev. Oscar~~: *John Haukeis*

Do you now in the presence of the Church commit yourself to this trust and responsibility?

Pastor Moore: I do.

Chapter V

service or duty

SENDING IN HOPE: THE PASTORAL OFFICES

Many Christians, if asked to identify the most important and memorable liturgical experiences of their lives, would turn to one or another occasion of worship which was neither preaching, baptismal nor eucharistic. They would speak of a wedding, or an ordination, or even a funeral. They might speak of their own confirmation, or of an occasion of praying with a sick person, or blessing a new home. These reflections remind us that there is a category of Christian corporate worship which we have not yet touched upon but which may be even more important to the consciousness of Christians than those rites we have thus far analysed. That category is known as the Pastoral Offices or the Occasional Offices. Even those designations suggest that somehow they are less than central to the life of the community. They are occasional, or the peculiar province of the pastorate. Their history tends to confirm such a judgment. Most of the rites we shall discuss under this heading have had a very uneven course of development in many traditions. Some of them have only slowly made their way into liturgical books and life. Some

have changed radically through the centuries. And, as we shall see, there are some related areas of life which have not yet been touched in this way though the logic of these offices would seem to lead in such directions.

We must begin therefore by specifying with some precision what such an office is about, how it fits into the general pattern of Christian worship, and in particular, how it complements and also is distinguished from proclamation and sacrament. We shall make this definition in three ways. We shall speak of the pastoral offices as being related to (1) human time, (2) Christian mission and (3) Holy Spirit and hope. It should become clear in our exposition of these three points how it is that these offices may not properly be subsumed under either preaching or sacraments. It may also become clear how it is that these offices, in their relation to preaching and sacraments, are essential to that more complete definition of the notae ecclesiae which Karl Barth called for by pointing to the "gap" in Reformed ecclesiology which could not get beyond "right preaching" and "obedient (sacramental) administration." Recalling Barth's own schematization of the work of reconciliation as an exercise of Christ's three-fold office of priest, king and prophet, it will also be important to bear in mind that these offices, as human, missional and hopeful inevitably are to be understood as the church's liturgical ("central" in Barth's metaphor) celebration of

does not mention preaching

that prophetic office. That places an extraordinary burden upon those offices but also potentially exposes the limitations of much so-called "prophetic" ecclesial activity.

Having provided a general definition of the pastoral offices we will then turn to their specification. By then it will be clear that by the very nature of the subject there may be no definitive list. We will concern ourselves only with (1) confirmation, (2) marriage, (3) ordination, (4) confession, (5) care for the sick, and (6) separation.

Our first word of definition of the pastoral offices is that they relate to human time. This defines their centrality, not their eccentricity if, as Paul Lehmann has observed, "The Christian koinonia is the foretaste and the sign in the world that God has always been and is contemporaneously doing what it takes to make and to keep human life human."¹ The same point is made by Karl Barth as he proposes the opening up of the notae ecclesiae (in a citation we have previously noted):

As God exists for it (the world) in His divine way, and Jesus Christ in His divine human, so the Christian community exists for it in its own purely human (way).²

¹Paul L. Lehmann, Ethics in a Christian Context (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 101.

²Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics IV/3/2nd The Doctrine of Reconciliation (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1962), p. 786.

James White perceptively defines these offices and occasions of worship as

times when the community of faith gathers around individuals to express its love as they pass through various stages: marriage (for most), ordination (for some), serious sickness (for many) and death (for all).³

At a later point in the argument we will suggest that these offices are expressive more of hope than of love, as White says, but the more important point is that in these liturgical moments the Christian community, in its corporate life, accommodates and adjusts itself and its rhythms to those of its members in all their humanity. Only in these offices do human experiences and passages become the primary content of Christian worship. That puts worship in touch with elemental human reality since, as Harvey Cox has pointed out,

No other creature we know of relives the legends of his forefathers, blows out candles on a birthday cake, or dresses up and pretends he is someone else.⁴

This character of the pastoral offices also sharply distinguishes them from the church's sacraments, which are

³James F. White, Introduction to Christian Worship (Nashville: Abingdon, 1980), p. 237.

⁴Harvey Cox, The Feast of Fools (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 11.

directly and formally related to the time of Jesus Christ. It also distinguishes them from the central preoccupation of the preaching office which by virtue of its scriptural basis necessarily turns upon the time of revelation and redemption.

The distinctiveness of the pastoral offices from preaching and sacraments is no doubt what has relegated them to a subsidiary status in the canon of Christian worship. One can understand therefore White's attempt to recover their significance by including them in the general category of "sacramental life"⁵ (which coheres, of course, with his above-quoted description of them as expressions of love rather than hope), but is it not possible that it is precisely their distinctiveness that provides them with their significance? Here humanity is set at the center. No doubt that is liturgically traumatic. No doubt that marriages and funerals are liturgically problematic. That is as it should be, for therein humanity makes its way through the rent veil of the Temple and calls for the confirmation of the Christian community as the self-confessed center and source of humanity.

In addition to their human character, and because of it, we may also say that the pastoral offices are expressive, in a way neither sacraments nor preaching can be, of the

⁵James F. White, Christian Worship in Transition (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), pp. 53-60.

sending of the Christian community "into all the world." This is its missio. Returning to Karl Barth's picture of the concentric circles of worship and the daily life of Christians we can suggest that it is these acts of worship which are meant to provide the most concrete clues to the Christian concerning the character of his or her life in the world as itself the praise and service of God whereby all, seeing their good works "may give the praise to your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). The pastoral offices address such human ethical moments as inter-personal commitment, vocational decision, sickness and ageing, as well as death. Surely these are critical points of the faithfulness and discipleship. The pastoral offices not only take these moments as their occasion but in their liturgical setting bring such moments into the context of Word and sacrament. This is what every pastor learns anew when confronted with a tragic death. J. G. Davies gives eloquent expression to this missional character of worship, even though he does not in his excellent book Worship and Mission get around to the specifics of the pastoral offices:

Again, cultic acts may become occasions for escape from the world, but when worship and mission in the world are united this form of escapism should no longer be possible. Worship is not something that happens between the Church and God, but between the world and God, the Church being no more than an instrument. The Church worships, in Christ, on behalf of the world, and indeed as the world of which it is a part. For Christians both share and understand the joys, aspirations, failings and uncertainties of the whole world and are to offer them within

the adoration, confession, thanksgiving, etc. which the mighty acts of Christ call for in them.⁶

It will be remembered that this was a point Karl Barth was at some pains to elucidate regarding the Reformation's strange silence concerning Christian mission (in IV/3/2nd). It is not surprising therefore to note that in spite of the liturgical creativity of that period it paid remarkably little attention to these offices. Though Calvin's books do include a marriage rite there is nothing for burial and of course anointing of the sick as well as confirmation have been banished. White's remark about the uneven history of these offices in liturgical practice certainly applies to the Reformation: "They are not constants and may have been dispensed with or ignored altogether by massive segments of Christianity. . ."⁷

If, as we proposed in the very first pages of this thesis, worship is essential to the unity of the church, and unity to mission, then the pastoral offices as a primary definition of the meaning and scope of Christian mission, must have an importance which they have rarely been given by the worshipping community.

⁶J. G. Davies, Worship and Mission (New York: Association Press, 1967), p. 19.

⁷James F. White, New Forms of Worship (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971), p. 61.

As human and missional the pastoral offices are also therefore, and not as a third thing but as an unfolding inner necessity, occasions of Christian hope, or, as Barth and Cochrane would have us say, they attest to Christian hope. This must be the quintessential way to speak of Christ's prophetic ministry in the world, the exercise in the midst of the community of his messianic authority and promise. It is a happy development in the history of theology that just as Barth has uncovered the deficiency of classical Western systems in terms of the church's mission or sending as expressive of Christ's prophetic office, a whole theology has been produced which sets at the center the concepts of hope (or promise). A leading exponent of this position has put these concepts together in a way which is helpful for our enterprise:

The missio of Jesus becomes intelligible only by by the promissio. His future, in the light of which he can be recognized as what he is, is illuminated in advance by the promise of the righteous of God, the promise of life as a result of resurrection from the dead, and the promise of the Kingdom of God in a new totality of being.⁸

Moltmann moves even closer to our liturgical subject matter as he concludes,

As long as "every thing" is not "very good", the difference between hope and reality remains, and

⁸Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 203.

faith remains irreconciled and must press towards the future in hope and suffering.⁹

We have already cited Barth's own way of saying this: "Hope takes place in the act of taking the next step."¹⁰ It is this particular character of Christian hope, its character as concrete steps in faith and hope, that leads White to entitle his analysis of the pastoral offices "Passages":

Each passage reflects three stages in varying degrees: separation from a past way of life; transition, or the moment when one crosses the threshold into a new order of being; and incorporation into a new way of life. Several are accompanied by transition periods of time (engagement, seminary studies, declining health) as well as transitions in space (new home, hospitalization, cemetery). For Christians, none of these passages is a purely private moment but rather a concern shared by the whole Christian community.¹¹

As we undertake a study of several of these rites of Christian passage, the pastoral offices, we will use as a recurring method of definition the specification of just that issue: the way in which the whole Christian community shares this or that passage, in hope. We shall remember too that we are working now in the context of that aspect of reconciliation which Karl Barth identifies as Vocation, and that the meaning of that for Christian existence, churchly and personal, is

⁹Ibid., p. 215.

¹⁰Barth, op. cit., p. 939.

¹¹James F. White, Introduction. . . , op. cit., p. 237.

witness, affliction and liberation (IV/3, paragraph 71, subsections 4-6).

With this general definition of pastoral office we turn to an analysis of six such liturgical occasions. Our principles of selection are thoroughly practical. Confirmation has already become a concern because of its confused relation to baptism. Marriage and burial are inescapable, pastorally speaking, and The Worshipbook does provide such rites. Ordination (to both lay and clerical offices in Presbyterian polity) is essential to the life of the congregation but is at present the subject of a good deal of questioning which might be illuminated by reflection on the rites. Care for the sick is both so central to pastoral care and so foreign to liturgical assembly in the Reformed tradition that it calls out for some discussion. And in a biblical context at least, it seems highly inappropriate to speak of the pastoral and liturgical care of the sick and not also to speak of the pastoral and liturgical care of the sinner, hence our interest in confession. It will be noted also that the last of the pastoral offices which we will take up is spoken of as "separation" rather than burial or funeral; this is to allow us to think of a range of rites some of which have to do with death and dying, but not all. In the limited compass of these pages we can at best hope to offer some biblical and theological reflections on these offices, to specify how, if at all, they have occurred in

Reformed liturgical history, and to make some practical liturgical and pastoral suggestions about the rites involved.

CONFIRMATION

We have already surveyed the complex history of this rite and its relation to baptism as initiation. Calvin's rejection of it showed a historical sensitivity which even he may not have been fully aware of. It certainly cannot be regarded as a dominical sacrament, nor can it be justified as a continuing rite by appealing to its symbolism of the giving of the Holy Spirit which seems to be the approach of contemporary Catholicism:

The symbolic act of confirmation brings man the grace of Pentecost, the grace of the glorified Christ, who through his Spirit gives life to the Church for the service of mankind.¹²

A more authoritative source, Paul VI, in his Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation says,

For that purpose, it has been our wish also to include in this revision what concerns the very essence of the rite of confirmation, through which the faithful receive the Holy Spirit as a Gift.¹³

¹²Confirmation: Pastoral Concerns, ed. Joseph L. Cunningham (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1973), p. 50.

¹³Paul VI, Apostolic Constitution on the Sacrament of Confirmation in The Rites of the Catholic Church (New York: Pueblo Publishing Co., 1976), p. 291.

Baptismal renewal is not rebaptism. . . Baptismal renewal. . . with its stress on "remember your baptism and be thankful," is a fresh reminder to us of what God has already done for us.²¹

In all these ways, and possibly more, a re-worked and re-oriented confirmation is turned from a backwards look at (and attempted "completion" of) baptism to a forward, future-oriented anticipation of growth in grace. As such it becomes an act of hope as the strengthening hands and hearts of the community reach out (or in) to individual members of the community assuring them that "If one part is hurt, all parts hurt with it" and "If one part is given special honor, all parts enjoy it" (1 Cor. 12:26).

MARRIAGE

Although marriage only made its way into Christian worship slowly (White points out that it was not until the twelfth century that weddings had even gotten "to the church door or porch"²²) the Reformed tradition has always regarded it as an act of worship. John Knox's 1556 Genevan Service Book includes a brief rite for marriage which W. D. Maxwell convincingly traces through Calvin and Farel to the early

²¹Ibid., p. 57.

²²James F. White, Introduction. . . , op. cit., p. 240.

"German Reformed Orders of Strasburg from 1526 to 1533."²³

The Order was quite simple, consisting of an Exhortation, the Question concerning impediments, the Vows, a Reading from scripture (Matt. 19:3-6), a brief Charge, Blessing and Psalm 128 (sung). A rubric indicates that it is to take place just before the sermon and Maxwell surmises that "although it is not mentioned specifically in the Forme of Prayers, it was probably Sunday."²⁴ This practice naturally was carried back to Scotland where it did not change until well into the seventeenth century when "more Puritanic views of the Lord's Day, and perhaps also less sacred and Churchly views of the marriage ceremony became prevalent. . ."²⁵ This explains the Westminster Directory's Sunday prohibition of marriage. Happily the present Directories of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. and the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. make no such stipulation. They do not specify much more in the way of a service than 1556 did, although provision for the giving or exchanging of rings is now made, which at one time was a hotly disputed issue between Puritans and Episcopalians.

²³William D. Maxwell, The Liturgical Portions of the Genevan Service Book (Westminster: Faith Press, 1965), p. 53.

²⁴Ibid., p. 149.

²⁵G. W. Sprott, Worship and Offices in the Church of Scotland (Edinburgh and London: Wm. Blackwood and Sons, 1882), p. 147.

The Worshipbook moves much further however in the direction of providing a full service of the Word for this occasion. (This is somewhat noteworthy in view of the fact, confided in the writer by the author of the liturgical portions of the book, David Buttrick, that he did not wish to provide a marriage rite at all, believing that this was a civil business, not ecclesiastical.) This Order (pp. 65-68) provides for (1) a brief Entry rite of scriptural sentences, a hymn of praise and a unison confession and declaration of pardon, (2) a service of the Word consisting of a prayer, Old and New Testament lessons, a sermon and ascription of praise, and (3) the marriage rite proper. This rite begins with the exchange of vows (and rings), and includes also a charge to the couple, prayer for them (introduced with responses reminiscent of the beginning of the Service for the Lord's Day and the Communion service), the Lord's Prayer, a declaration of marriage, a hymn of thanksgiving and dismissal. No provision is made for a celebration of Holy Communion, which is now characteristic of all new marriage rites.

What is the purpose of this fairly extensive Order and can it be justified? We can perhaps most easily get at the answers to those questions by posing another: For whom is the wedding rite? Two answers come to mind: (a) The wedding is for the couple themselves, and (b) the wedding is for the community that gathers around them (which is not necessarily the congregation). Of course it might be objected

that this is already to lose touch with the marriage as worship since those responses (and the question) sound terribly utilitarian. But we return to our thesis that in a sense the pastoral offices are utilitarian: they are for people, for humanity in the midst of life and passages. That is why here too we find James White's identification of marriage as sacramental unfortunate. However much it is a sign of the mutual love of the couple, its relationship to the community is slightly different and not fully described as the church's "surrounding a Christian couple with love. . .".²⁶ More of that in a moment.

(a) The wedding is for the couple themselves, and in this sense it is not even for their families. Families are not getting married (they may not even like one another all that much); two persons are. Furthermore it is the case strictly speaking that the couple marry one another, that is, they are the "ministers" of the rite. In this sense, says James White with a touch of irony, it is "the one sacrament a Roman Catholic priest or bishop cannot perform, though he may administer a nuptial mass and bless the union."²⁷ The cleric is simply a witness on behalf of the church (and of the state). Interestingly enough, this has always been the

²⁶White, op. cit., p. 246.

²⁷Ibid., p. 244.

clear conviction of the Society of Friends except that at a Quaker wedding the community is its own witness. If we are to take this seriously we probably will have to re-think the role of the bride and groom in planning and "ministering" the rite. This is not to say that we will not want clerical persons to provide their liturgical expertise and presiding skills in the event. But clearly clergy and musicians must learn better how to help a couple organize a Christian liturgy for themselves. That is precisely the usefulness of a full rite such as The Worshipbook provides.

(b) The wedding is for the community that gathers around them. At best this will mean, the congregation and others who are family and friends of the couple. The family and friends are of course there, and participating as fully as possible, out of their human affection and concern for the couple. But what is the relation of the church to the couple? The Second Vatican Council's Constitution On the Church puts it nicely:

From the marriage of Christians there comes the family in which new citizens of human society are born and, by the grace of the Holy Spirit in Baptism, those are made children of God so that the People of God may be perpetuated throughout the centuries. In what might be regarded as the domestic Church, the parents, by word and example, are the first heralds of the faith with regard to their children.²⁸

²⁸Vatican Council II - The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents, ed. Austin Flannery, O.P. (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1975), p. 362.

The Christian family forms a "domestic church." This means that the congregation has a very specific ministry to the new family, the new ecclesiola. The congregation is for the couple a sign-community. It is present to them, in the marriage rite and beyond, to guide and lead them forward into the fulness of life together. Presumably the church as community has some experience of what is involved in facing the future together, in "bear(ing) one another's burdens" (Gal. 6:2). In this sense the rite is to remind the church that it is meant to be for the couple a sign of hope for their own future growing into "one body". That of course is "a great mystery" but it "applies to Christ and the Church" (Eph. 5:32). In marriage therefore the church takes up the same stance with regard to the couple that we have already seen it doing in what might be made of a revised pattern of confirmation.

It is this consideration which does suggest the appropriateness of the marriage rite as being fully expressive of the congregation's assembly, including the Supper, as possible. Just as the couple will be embarking upon a life together which will constantly return to the meal table, so they need at the outset the example of the church's own meal, its eating and drinking with Jesus. It is this consideration therefore which must be the other side of issue involved in inviting the ministrants, the couple, to plan their own rite. They are being invited to do that not only as individuals but

as members of the congregation who are self-consciously asking it to lead them forward into an experience which is new for them but old for it.

Since the assembly for the marriage is "mixed" (i.e. family, friends, congregation) considerable discretion will have to be exercised to insure that all are welcome. Perhaps members of the wedding party could read the scriptures, or lead in the prayers. If Holy Communion is to be celebrated all must be invited to partake with the church's traditional invitation, but none should feel embarrassed if he or she does not wish to. And such an occasion might be the time to open up the Agape-Eucharist suggestion of Arthur Cochrane's.

In the light of this way of thinking about marriage as an event wherein the churchly community affirms the new human community it would seem that the more recently-made proposals that the church institute a divorce rite²⁹ must be turned down, or done under the rubric of confession (to be discussed later in this chapter). At best it would seem that this should be done more privately by the pastor and whomever may helpfully be involved.

On the other hand there are other liturgical actions which arise from Christian marriage which can be commended.

²⁹ Ritual in a New Day: An Invitation (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976).

The Worshipbook provides "A Service for the Recognition of a Marriage" (pp. 69-70) and with judicious editing it might well serve for situations where couples have been publicly living together without having been married and now wish to take that step. A new publication of the United Methodist Church³⁰ provides a similar rite as well as texts to use for "Anniversaries of Marriage" and "Renewal of Wedding Vows."

ORDINATION

It is the corporate nature of the community that requires some sort of presiding or presidential figure(s). As Arthur Cochrane observes, "It will usually be the case in every congregational meal that someone will be asked to preside. In the early church that person was called a "president."³¹ But it is equally the corporate nature of the community that requires radical caution at the point of appointment to special office:

Even linguistically, it must avoid the fatal word "office" and replace it by "service," which can be applied to all Christians. Or, if it does use it, it can do so only on the understanding that in the Christian community either all are

³⁰ A Service of Christian Marriage (Nashville: Abingdon, n.d.).

³¹ Arthur C. Cochrane, Eating and Drinking with Jesus (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1974), p. 96.

also provides little help in what must be the other side of liturgical and pastoral ministry to the sick, namely, the words and actions of the community in the course of its usual liturgical assembly. There too it is vital that we recover an intense consciousness of the sick who may or may not be physically present. There too we may, from time to time, invoke the symbols and gestures of healing in the midst of all our words. And there particularly should we be welcoming of those for whom certain forms of bodily or mental illness are a way of life: the handicapped.

SEPARATION

This section concerns itself with death and its appropriate liturgical rites. It is entitled "separation" simply as a signal that there are other experiences in life which are death-like in that they involve profound separation. Divorce is one of them and some of what is to be said here is applicable to what was said in the previous section on Marriage. Another occasion of separation was mentioned under confirmation: the departure of children from full-time residence with parents. And in our mobile society, congregations are always losing both individuals and families, for which event they have no rites whatever, such as a leave-taking service. This writer has provided a brief separation rite for use by United Presbyterian youth at the end of their year together (late Spring) which has been published

in their New Covenant Community materials.⁵⁷

To speak of separation is also to remember that in many cases death is not an unexpected "bolt out of the blue." In many cases its approach has been obvious and can be prepared for. Separation is a process. Most encouraging is the development of specialized ministries and resources for the Christian community's ministry in this process. Also encouraging is the development of the Hospice movement. This is a multi-disciplinary, and primarily residential approach to the dying process which emphasizes preparation for death and acceptance of it wherever possible at home and with whatever of friends and family are available, present.

The Christian community, the community of faith brings to separation not only love, but also hope. Here is the crucial testing of Christian hope. This must be its preoccupation as it shapes its pastoral rites for those who are dying, who are dead, and who are living. The ground of this hope is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and that other parousia, his expected return. Only Karl Barth could so perceptively expound the hope of the Lord's return as placing a boundary or limit around death. Because the Lord will return there is now an alternative to death:

⁵⁷ New Covenant Community (Philadelphia: The Geneva Press, 1977).

the parousia of Jesus Christ. . . carries with it an alternative so far as concerns the end of the man living in it, so that his end does not have to be his death.⁵⁸

So Barth may say of death:

In its character as the end of human and even Christian existence it is confirmed but also relativised by the fact that in that other form its end is so clearly shown to be a beginning. Seen in this light, can death as the first form of the end be anything more than a provisional substitute or mask of the true end, or indicate otherwise than in a glass darkly (1 Cor. 13:12). the original of this true end which comes with the coming again of Jesus Christ? In other words, even if the end is still before us in the form of our dying, can we look or move towards it otherwise than in hope?⁵⁹

This is the role of rites for the time of death, to provide a way of moving forward in whatever of life remains, in hope.

This was the character of early Christian burial practice:

The dead Christian who had kept the faith was treated as a victor, and the funeral procession had the character of the triumph accorded a victorious general on return home. Since cemeteries, by Christian times, were outside the city walls, the carrying forth was a major part of the rite. It was done to the accompaniment of

⁵⁸ Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics IV/3/2nd, op. cit. p. 924.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 926.

psalms of hope and praise and shouts of alleluia. White garments were worn, palm leaves and lights were carried, and incense burned as the community marched to the cemetery in broad daylight (unlike the nighttime funerals of pagans). Previously the body had been washed, anointed, and wrapped in linen at the home of the deceased while prayers were said.⁶⁰

By the time of the Reformation however this resurrection rite had given way to the office of the dead, surrounded with all manner of dread, superstition and gloom. The Gloria in excelsis gave way at Requiems to the Dies Irae. As a result the churches of the Reformation contented themselves with very simple funeral rites, usually at the grave, and the Reformed tradition went so far as to suppress even those devotions:

A low ebb was reached in the Westminster Directory of 1644, which decreed that the body be 'decently attended' to the cemetery but immediately buried "without any ceremony." Even funeral sermons became controversial among both the Scots and English Puritans, for they often degenerated into eulogies of virtues real and imaginary. Some in the Free Church tradition regarded burial as purely a secular matter and conducted no services. Calvin had approved of funeral sermons but never provided a liturgy for Christian burial. Usually the Reformed tradition tolerated a service of scripture and sermon after the burial.⁶¹

⁶⁰White, op. cit., pp. 263-4.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 266.

So once again, and here at the point of the clearest affirmation of Christian hope, Reformed churches have the problem of giving liturgical expression to biblical and theological conviction in the context of a post-Reformation "hang-over" of hostility to all that Rome was doing wrong. This situation has also to be analysed however in the light of Barth's critique of Reformation theology as being seriously deficient in its appreciation for that office and work of Christ which does in fact issue in Christian hope. Perhaps it is not at all to be wondered at that in such soil rites of Christian burial could hardly flourish.

How shall we proceed? The questions asked in the section on Marriage might be helpful in giving shape to our thinking about death-separation rites. There we asked Who is the rite for? Here we may answer: (a) for the deceased, (b) for the bereaved, and (c) for the Christian community.

(a) Traditional Roman Catholic rites (and vestigial Reformed traditions, as already quoted) seemed to be mainly preoccupied with the deceased. But that does not ipso facto mean that now we are to pay no attention to the deceased. That would be to follow the lead of well-intentioned funeral directors who either spirit the body away, or dress it up so as to mask the mask of death. Just as the church has a ministry to those who are sick of body, so also does it have a ministry to the body of the dead. In many ways that body

was inextricably linked to that person; it was in a true sense, their persona. And just as the friends of Jesus committed his body to a tomb so also may we show the same love and respect. This means that the coffin bearing the body will be visible to the community (though not opened since there is no reason to cosmetize the body). That being the case the adornment appropriate to the coffin is a cloth pall, not flowers. The pall might well be of white and bear the sign of the cross. And at the time of burial the immediate community should probably be present for its lowering into the grave. Carrying the coffin to and from the church and to the grave does provide the occasion for something of the triumphant procession White described from early Christian experience.

(b) The bereaved form a particular community within the larger. We might define them as those persons for whom the physical presence of the deceased was important. Traditional Protestant rites have been mainly preoccupied with them. So it is sometimes said, "Funerals are for the living, not the dead." But because they form a particular community they should be isolated neither from the larger community nor from the deceased, as seems to be the concern of oversolicitous funeral directors. They need to be enabled to make what farewells they wish to the body both before the rites and as part of the rites, such as burial or cremation. They also need to be involved as closely as possible in

planning the rites. This is very difficult if the assumption be that the funeral will occur within a few days of death (unless there has been pastoral planning ahead). This suggests that there might be reason to reverse the usual order of funeral-committal so that the committal is done quickly and in the presence of the bereaved only, and the funeral be done several days or even a week or two later when the bereaved will have had time to adjust to the trauma and in that way be more helpful and thoughtful liturgical planners.

(c) The Christian community is again, as in the instance of marriage, a sign, a sign of hope for the bereaved. This requires that it be permitted the maximal opportunity to speak its language and to engage in its actions. This requires, as The Worshipbook provides, a full service of the Word, celebrated in the church, and at best, which The Worshipbook does not provide, a celebration of the marriage supper of the Lamb, Holy Communion. This will include hymns (sung by all), prayers (said by all), readings from scripture (by family and friends) and the exchange of Peace (now as comfort) as well as the bread and wine of the Supper to which the deceased was admitted by his or her baptism, that prefiguration of the event of death, but not his or her death only, rather, the death of the One who is also our hope.

Never has the power of that hope, grounded in that One, and expressed in the community's own scriptural-liturgical language, been more impressively demonstrated than on one sad afternoon in a telephone call from a grieving brother in the faith. He had been watching by his dying son, his only son, for a month and a half. He had now watched his son die. He had also watched much of his own hope die. And when he announced this over the telephone, before even saying "Hello" he said the Lord's word, "Horace, it is finished." Faith, love and hope hadn't failed him. They hadn't, . . .and haven't. . .ended. 1 Corinthians 13:13.

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